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| APPLICATION NO.                   | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/781,810                        | 02/20/2004  | Shinsuke Kobayashi   | 03500.017916        | 3940             |
| 5514                              | 7590        | 06/14/2006           | EXAMINER            |                  |
| FITZPATRICK CELLA HARPER & SCINTO |             |                      | JOERGER, KAITLIN S  |                  |
| 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA              |             |                      | ART UNIT            |                  |
| NEW YORK, NY 10112                |             |                      | PAPER NUMBER        |                  |
|                                   |             |                      | 3653                |                  |

DATE MAILED: 06/14/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/781,810

Applicant(s)

KOBAYASHI ET AL.

Examiner

Kaitlin S. Joerger

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 20 February 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/15/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_.

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-5, 7, 10-15, 17, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ando et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,631,252).

Ando et al. teach a sheet transport apparatus comprising:

- a sheet transport path for transporting a sheet, see figure 8; and
- a regulation member, 7, the regulation member provided in the transport path, being brought into contact with a swelling portion occurring on a surface of an envelope to press the swelling portion, see column 1, lines 40+;
- the transport path is curved and the regulation member is brought into contact on an inner-side surface of the envelope such that the swelling portion can be pressed, see figure 8;
- the regulation member faces opposite ends of the envelope in a direction perpendicular to the transport path, see figure 2;
- the apparatus further comprises two pairs of rotary member, 12 and 13, for transporting the sheet, and hold means, 55, for rotatably holding the to be brought into contact with the envelope, the regulation member disposed in the holding means, the regulation members comprises the rotary means;

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- the regulation member is spaced a predetermined distance from the envelope.

Ando et al. further teaches an image forming apparatus in which after a toner image formed on an image bearing member is transferred to a sheet, the toner image is fixed, the apparatus comprising:

- a sheet feeding means, 22, for feeding stored sheets one by one;
- a sheet transport path for transporting a sheet, see figure 8; and
- a regulation member, 7, the regulation member provided in the transport path, being brought into contact with a swelling portion occurring on a surface of an envelope to press the swelling portion, see column 1, lines 40+;
- the transport path is curved and the regulation member is brought into contact on an inner-side surface of the envelope such that the swelling portion can be pressed, see figure 8;
- the regulation member faces opposite ends of the envelope in a direction perpendicular to the transport path, see figure 2;
- the apparatus further comprises two pairs of rotary member, 12 and 13, for transporting the sheet, and hold means, 55, for rotatably holding the to be brought into contact with the envelope, the regulation member disposed in the holding means, the regulation members comprises the rotary means;
- the regulation member is spaced a predetermined distance from the envelope.

Claims 7 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rutishauser (U.S. Patent No. 4,915,369).

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Rutishauser teaches a sheet transport apparatus, comprising:

- a sheet transport path, 14; and
- a regulation member, 16, said regulation member provided in the transport path at a predetermined distance from an envelope to be transported;
- the regulation member is a rib, see figures 3, 4, and 5.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 6, 8, 16, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,631,252).

Ando et al. discloses the invention except for a distance between the regulation member and the envelope that is set to a value in a range between .5 mm and 3.0 mm, he does however disclose changing the distance of the regulation member when an envelope is transported.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to set the distance range between .5mm and 3.0mm as that is a well known range of envelope thicknesses and it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum range involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

Claims 17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rutishauser (U.S. Patent No. 4,915,369) in view of Ando et al. (U.S. Patent 6,631,252).

Rutishauser teaches an office machine with

- a sheet feeding portion, the sheet feeding portion being provided with a rotatable sheet feeding roller, 20, in contact with a surface of stacked sheets;
- a sheet transport path, 14; and
- a regulation member, 16, provided in the transport path at a distance from an envelope being transport;
- the regulation member is a rib, see figures 3, 4, and 5.

Rutishauser, however, does not teach that the office machine comprises a toner image that is formed on a bearing member provided in an image forming portion is transferred to a sheet, the toner image is fixed in a fixing portion, but Ando et al. It is well known in the art to construct an office machine using a toner image bearing member and fixing portion in order to put an image on a sheet, and that this printing method creates a much clearer image than other types, such as ribbon printing. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the office machine of Rutishauser with the image forming portion of Ando et al. in order to print clearer, higher quality images.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kaitlin S. Joerger whose telephone number is 571-272-6938. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9-5.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eileen Lillis can be reached on 571-272-6928. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

ksj  
  
7 June 2006

  
KATHY MATECKI  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
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